

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT LOU CANNON FRONT PAGE BYLINER
WASHINGTON POST DECEMBER 27 HEADED "FORD'S DISAPPOINTMENT;
FAILURE TO GAIN NEW ARMS PACT WITH SOVIETS."

2. VAIL, COLO, DEC. 26--PRESIDENT FORD SAID IN AN
INTERVIEW RELEASED TODAY THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED AT BEING
UNABLE TO ACHIEVE A STRENGTHENED STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION
AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

3. "ONE OF MY BIG DISAPPOINTMENTS...WAS NOT BUILDING ON
THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT OF 1974 AND GETTING A SALT

II AGREEMENT," THE PRESIDENT SAID. "I THINK IT IS
TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT TO THE WORLD--NOT ONLY TO THE
UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION BUT ALL MANKIND--THAT
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A SALT II AGREEMENT SHOULD BE ACHIEVED."

4. FORD WENT ON TO SAY THAT "WITH GOOD LEADERSHIP AND
WITH GOOD DECISION MAKING" A SALT II AGREEMENT COULD BE
ACHIEVED DURING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

5. THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS CAME IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA WALTERS SCHEDULED TO BE BROADCAST ON JAN. 2. IT WAS TAPED ON DEC. 4 AND MADE AVAILABLE TODAY BY ABC NEWS.

6. FORD MADE NO COMMENT AND WAS NOT ASKED ABOUT HIS EMPHASIS ON "PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH" INSTEAD OF DETENTE WHEN HE WAS BEING PRESSED BY RONALD REAGAN IN THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES FOR SUPPOSEDLY BEING TOO CONCILIATORY TOWARD THE SOVIETS.

7. IN THE INTERVIEW FORD LOOKED BACK WITH RELATIVELY FEW REGRETS ON HIS 2-1/2 YEARS IN OFFICE. HE SAID, AS HE HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, THAT HIS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS A RESTORATION OF TRUST IN THE PRESIDENCY AND HIS GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT THE FACT "THAT WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TURN THE ECONOMY AROUND AS EFFECTIVELY AS I HAD HOPED."

8. FORD ALSO DEFENDED HIS PARDON OF RICHARD M. NIXON, SAYING THAT BEFORE THE PARDON HE WAS SPENDING 25 PER CENT OF HIS TIME ON ISSUES RELATING TO NIXON WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEVOTING FULL TIME TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE ECONOMY AND THE VIETNAM WAR.

9. HE SAID HE DID NOT REGRET THE PARDON, ALTHOUGH "IT HAD AN ADVERSE IMPACT AS FAR AS THE ELECTION WAS CONCERNED..."

10. WHEN WALTERS ASKED FORD WHY HE MAINTAINED A RELATIONSHIP WITH NIXON, THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD SEEN HIM ONLY UNCLASSIFIED

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ONCE, IN THE FALL OF 1974, WHEN NIXON WAS "DESPERATELY ILL" IN A CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL.

11. "I WOULD HAVE HAD A GUILTY CONSCIENCE IF I HADN'T GONE TO THE HOSPITAL AND SEEN A MAN WHO WAS LITERALLY ON

DEATH'S BED," FORD SAID. "HE HAD BEEN MY FRIEND FOR 25 YEARS AND HERE WAS A PERSON WHO WAS AS CLOSE TO DEATH AS I HAVE EVER SEEN SOMEBODY AND I FELT THAT IT WAS A PERSONAL OBLIGATION TO GO AND SEE HIM."

12. FORD HAD FEW SECOND-GUESSES ABOUT THE 1976 POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT HE MADE A MISTAKE IN FAILING TO VISIT DELAWARE, WHICH WAS CARRIED BY JIMMY CARTER WHILE REPUBLICANS WERE WINNING THE OTHER RACES THERE. BUT THE STATE'S THREE ELECTORAL VOTES WOULD HAVE MADE NO DIFFERENCE IN THE OUTCOME.

13. THE PRESIDENT AGAIN DEFENDED HIS SELECTION OF KANSAS SEN. BOB DOLE AS HIS RUNNING MATE, SAYING HE DID NOT THINK THAT DOLE HAD COST HIM VOTES. AND HE DISMISSED CARTER'S CAMPAIGN RHETORIC, WHICH HE SUGGESTED WOULDN'T HAMPER THE GEORGIAN IN OFFICE.

14. "YOU REALIZE THAT IN A HOTLY CONTESTED POLITICAL CHALLENGE, THE CHALLENGER HAS TO MAKE BROADER STATEMENTS ..., " FORD SAID.

15. FORD SAID HE WOULDN'T MISS THE HELICOPTERS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL PERQUISITES, HAVING DONE WITHOUT THEM FOR 58 YEARS. BUT HE ADMITTED HE WILL MISS WASHINGTON AND THE WHITE HOUSE.

16. "I LIKE LIVING (THERE)," FORD SAID. "I AM VERY FRANK ABOUT IT. I LIKE THE HOUSE...I REALLY WILL MOSTLY MISS THE DAY-TO-DAY CHALLENGES. WHEN I WALK INTO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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OVAL OFFICE EVERY DAY THERE IS SOMETHING NEW THAT HAS TO BE DONE, WHETHER IT IS DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN POLICY. AND I WILL MISS THAT CHALLENGE BECAUSE THAT HAS BEEN THE THING THAT HAS BEEN THE THRUST IN MY LIFE AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER."

17. FORD SPENT A QUIET DAY AT HIS RENTED VAIL CHALET TODAY WATCHING THE PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS. THE

PRESIDENT HAD PLANNED TO SKI ON VAIL'S PATCHY SLOPES BUT CANCELED THE OUTING IN FAVOR OF THE GAMES.

18. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT AND THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY WERE BRIEFLY FRUSTRATED WHEN A POWER FAILURE CUT OUT VAIL'S CABLE TELEVISION AND DARKENED ALL THE TELEVISION SCREENS. POWER WAS RESTORED NEARLY AN HOUR AFTER THE FIRST GAME BEGAN. (END TEXT)
ROBINSON

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